

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES DISASTER RESPONSE PLAN TEMPLATE

County & Agency Name: Santa Cruz County Family and Children's Services_ Date Completed: 2/22/08

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This template is intended to be used as a guide to help counties incorporate the 2006 federal disaster response criteria as part of local child welfare plans. Minors in the probation system must also be included in the plan. County plans must be amended to include Child Welfare Services (CWS) Disaster Response Plans and be operational by September 28, 2007.

In September 2006, Congress passed the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (Public Law (PL) 109-288). PL 109-288 amended Part B of Title IV of the Social Security Act to reauthorize the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program. Among other changes, PL 109-288 established requirements for states on disaster planning in child welfare under Section 6 (a) (16). Accordingly, counties are requested to address the following program areas in developing local disaster readiness plans.

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CWS Disaster Response Criteria A:	Identify, locate, and continue availability of services for children under State care or supervision who are displaced or adversely affected by a disaster:
Essential Function:	1. Identification and location process of children who may be displaced
Process Description:	Lists of all children with open cases are compiled twice a month and distributed to the Program Managers. Previous versions are discarded. Lists contain identifying and location information of children, parents and out-of-home placements. In the event of an emergency situation, lists will be distributed to social workers and other staff who will be responsible for establishing contact and ascertaining the status of children living at home and in care, parents and caregivers. If contact by phone is not feasible, social workers will make home visits, contact shelters, hospitals, schools and law enforcement agencies as appropriate.

Essential Function:	2. Communication process with child care providers
Process Description:	All FCS personnel with an assigned caseload will contact the care providers on their assigned caseloads via telephone and/or personal home visits. If the assigned social worker is not available, another social worker will be assigned to make the contacts. Caseload coverage will be ensured by each supervisor or Program Manager, in that order. Other social workers and support staff will be utilized to assist in carrying out this function, as required.
Essential Function:	3. Identification of evacuation procedures – Event known in advance
Process Description:	Caregivers are responsible for assuring the safety of children in their care. All caregivers are required to maintain a current disaster response plan, which is regularly updated and placed on file with FCS.
Essential Function:	4. Identification of evacuation procedures – Event not known in advance
Process Description:	Caregivers must have up to date plans that take into account unforeseen disaster response.
Essential Function:	5. Identification of shelters
Process Description:	FCS personnel will be assigned to designated Red Cross shelters to assist with the intake and registration of any unaccompanied minors. Assignments will be made, based on need, by Program Managers or Supervisory personnel. Active efforts will be made to reunite minors with parents, guardians, or responsible relatives. Location of additional shelters will be made available through the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), in the event that Red Cross shelters are rendered unusable, or in situations where the surge capacity for shelters has been breached.
Essential Function:	6. Parental notification procedures
Process Description:	As soon as possible after ensuring the safety of all children in foster care, FCS personnel will make efforts to notify parents and/or legal guardians of their children's safety. Current emergency contact information is available in individual case files, or through the CWS/CMS data base. The contact lists kept by Program Managers will be made available and distributed to staff performing the follow

	up, as needed.
Essential Function:	7. Alternative processes for providing continued services
Process Description:	<p>FCS staff will ensure on-going emergency response and case management duties are fulfilled in accordance with current regulations and Human Services Departmental policy. First consideration will be given to functions tied to child safety. Staff will be assigned to duties based on demonstrated urgent need and may be required to assist with cases not on their primary case load, due to staff reassignment or unavailability. Necessary support documents will be available at central locations in north and south county Human Services offices.</p> <p>Consideration will be given to contacting unaffected counties as to available social work personnel who might be able to assist.</p> <p><u>Screening and Emergency Response</u></p> <p>Intake social workers will continue to accept referrals as long as phone service is available. Emergency Response workers will be assigned to investigate referrals. Social Workers who detain will place the children or turn the children over to the placement team for placement. In the event of a power outage, detaining social workers will be directed by Program Managers to a work site with electrical power to write investigative narratives.</p> <p><u>Dependency Investigations</u></p> <p>If the agency experiences a loss of power, the court workers will be directed to a location with a back-up power source to work on petitions and court reports.</p> <p><u>Family Maintenance/Family Reunification/Permanency Planning</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social Workers will make required face-to-face contacts as they locate children on their caseloads. 2. Notes will be recorded by hand and recorded in CWS/CMS as soon as possible. 3. In the event of a power outage, social workers will work on court reports at the location with a back-up power source for all court dates within 10 working days. 4. In the event the Court suspends operation, Social Workers will hold petitions and other Court documents, pending resumption of a normal Court schedule.

	<p><u>Licensing</u></p> <p>The Licensing team will focus on identifying emergency placement resources and completing home approvals.</p> <p><u>Adoptions</u></p> <p>The Adoptions Unit will perform its usual work as possible and/or assist other units as needed.</p>
Essential Function:	8. Staff assignment process
Process Description:	FCS personnel, upon learning of the disaster, will contact their supervisor or Program Manager for assignments and instruction. In the event that land line and cellular telephone service is interrupted, personnel will report to their primary work sites for duty assignment. Program Managers on site will be responsible for signing in all workers reporting for duty and will assign them to teams, based on needs to assure continued operation of all Agency essential functions. In the event that buildings are destroyed, or rendered unusable, personnel assigned to North County will report to a staging area in the parking area north of the 1400 Emeline facility. South County personnel will report to a staging area established in the parking lot located to the north of the 12 West Beach facility.
Essential Function:	9. Workload planning
Process Description:	After ensuring the safety of their own families, FCS staff will report to their designated station and perform their assigned essential duties and responsibilities as long as it is safe to do so. In the event the disaster results in the need for staff to be stationed at emergency shelters to handle intake and emergency response duties, staff will be assigned to provide those services on a rotation basis. Program Managers and Supervisors will assign staff, based on urgency of need.
Essential Function:	10. Alternative locations for operations
Process Description:	

	Alternative locations for operations will depend on the nature and duration of the emergency situation and may include staff relocation to sites other than primary Agency operations in north and south county. Specific sites will be determined on a case-by-case basis and may include other County office buildings, both on the Emeline campus or other facilities in Santa Cruz and public buildings in the greater Watsonville area. Program Managers will assure safe working environments for all staff and may require relocation of essential functions in order to assure minimal interruption of Agency business
Essential Function:	11. Orientation and ongoing training
Process Description:	Supervisors will review the disaster plan annually with their staff. The plan will also be added to the curriculum for Induction training for all new social workers. Foster Parents are instructed on emergency preparedness requirements during Orientation, during the licensing process, and review of their preparedness plan occurs annually.
CWS Disaster Response Criteria B:	Respond, as appropriate, to new child welfare cases in areas adversely affected by a disaster, and provide services in those cases:
Essential Function:	1. New child welfare investigation process
Process Description:	Intake social workers will continue to accept referrals as long as phone service is available. Emergency Response workers will be assigned to investigate referrals. Social Workers who detain will place children or turn the children over to the placement team for placement. In the event of a power outage, detaining social workers will be directed by Program Managers to a work site with electrical power to write investigative narratives.
Essential Function:	2. Implementation process for providing new services
Process Description:	Family and Children's Services will provide essential services only, until the situation is stabilized and staff resources are restored. FCS staff will continue to provide pre-placement services and/or foster care placement services as possible, prioritizing child safety.
CWS Disaster Response Criteria C:	Remain in communication with caseworkers and other essential child welfare personnel who are displaced because of a disaster:
Essential Function:	1. Communication structure – staff
Process Description:	Program Managers and Supervisors will contact by phone or in person all FCS Staff assigned to

	their respective section. All FCS staff who have secured themselves and their family are to contact or report to their worksite for emergency assignments.
Essential Function:	2. Communication structure – child welfare personnel (phone tree)
Process Description:	The Human Services Department maintains an Emergency Notification Roster, which is updated regularly and distributed to all management and supervisory personnel, for use in the event of a disaster or other emergency recall situation. Program Managers will contact all staff under their chain of command. In the event that cell and land line telephone service is not operational, staff will report to their assigned work areas or the identified staging areas, as soon as practically possible, for assignment.
Essential Function:	3. Communication structure – contracted services
Process Description:	Program Managers and Analysts will contact contracted service providers, and coordinate service delivery with them.
Essential Function:	4. Communication process when all normal channels are unavailable
Process Description:	All staff are assigned cell phones, and in the event of a disaster will be instructed to keep them turned on. In the event of interrupted cell phone service, personnel will be instructed to try SMS text messaging as an alternative means of communication.
Essential Function:	5. Communication frequency
Process Description:	Communication between management and line staff will happen at least once a day, and more often as necessary to advise of new information or instructions.
Essential Function:	6. Communication with media
Process Description:	The Division Director will coordinate with the Public Information Officer in providing Information on accessing essential functions, such as child abuse reporting. The director, PIO or a designee will respond to requests for information from media. All media inquiries to staff for comments will be directed to the Agency Director and/or PIO.

Essential Function:	7. Communication with volunteers
Process Description:	The Assistant Division Director will coordinate within the larger county structure and in accordance with the County's Emergency Plan in use and deployment of volunteers.
Essential Function:	8. Establishment of a toll-free number prior to disaster (include TTY)
Process Description:	Santa Cruz County Family and Children's Services has an emergency toll free number to report abuse and neglect. The service has TTY capability. In the event of an emergency situation where FCS cannot immediately respond to requests for assistance or for information, a recorded message will provide callers pertinent information, including a list of alternative public agency contact information. The system has the ability to receive voice mail messages from the public.
CWS Disaster Response Criteria D:	Preserve essential program records:
Essential Function:	1. Record preservation process
Process Description:	Most of Child Welfare Services documentation is stored on-line through the CWS/CMS system and is preserved at an off-site location. Paper files contain all essential documents in hard copy.
Essential Function:	2. Use of off-site back-up system
Process Description:	CWS/CMS can be accessed through computers located at the Santa Cruz and Watsonville Agency locations, and there is generator back-up in Santa Cruz. In the event of a long term interruption of services, data may be entered or accessed through neighboring county child welfare agencies.
CWS Disaster Response Criteria E:	Coordinate services and share information with other states:
Essential Function:	1. Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children reporting process
Process Description:	The ICPC Coordinator maintains a list of ICPC cases and will contact both the child and the care provider either by phone or in person, then contact the other state to advise them of the situation.

	They will also be responsible for arranging a child's transportation back to the other state if necessary.
Essential Function:	2. Mental health providers
Process Description:	The Mental Health and Substance Abuse Division of the County Health Services Agency may be called upon to provide mental health and substance abuse services during and after a disaster. In addition, community providers are available to provide direct services through the Department of Health EOC, the American Red Cross and the Santa Cruz County Medical Reserve Corps.
Essential Function:	3. Courts
Process Description:	The Welfare and Institutions Code requires that petitions and reports be prepared and filed within the statutory guidelines during and after a disaster, in the event the Court system is functioning. All other legal and civil rights accorded to children and their families will continue to apply during or after a disaster. FCS personnel will make active efforts to comply with these regulations. The Court, at its sole discretion, may suspend timelines for document submission. Within 5 days, FCS will provide the Court with a full accounting of all dependent children.
Essential Function:	4. Federal partners
Process Description:	FCS will provide information to federal partners on request.
Essential Function:	5. CDSS
Process Description:	FCS will provide information to CDSS on request.
Essential Function:	6. Tribes
Process Description:	Tribes will be notified in the same manner as parents and legal guardians regarding the safety and well-being of Native American children in placement.
Essential Function:	7. Volunteers
Process Description:	Not Applicable